

Amend Section 15609 of the Government Code to require the Members of the Board to meet at least 12 times a year, instead of monthly, in Sacramento and other locations in the state.

**Source: Honorable Chairwoman Carole Migden and
Honorable Bill Leonard**

Under current Section 15609 of the Government Code, the Members of the Board of Equalization (Board) are required to hold monthly meetings in Sacramento. The Board also holds special meetings at such places and times as the chairperson directs. Under current practices, public meetings are convened each month in Sacramento, at least quarterly in Culver City, and annually in San Diego. Board meetings offer taxpayers the opportunity to participate in the formulation of rules and regulations adopted by the Board to clarify the laws it administers, to present their case to the appellate body who reviews and decides property, business and income tax determinations, and to observe the Board as it carries out its official duties. The Board's five members serve concurrent four-year terms as the nation's only elected tax commission. Their popular election ensures that the Board's tax program administration remains directly accountable to the people. Four members are elected by district. The fifth member, the State Controller, is elected at large and serves in an ex officio capacity.

This proposal would give the Board flexibility in regard to when and where it meets without compromising the public's access to Board meetings or jeopardizing the Board's responsibilities under the Constitution or statutes.

Since the Board's workload fluctuates throughout the year, the statutes should allow the Board flexibility in regards to when, where, and even how the Members meet. The public's interest and resources are best served when elected bodies meet to discuss and decide matters when they are pertinent and not simply required by a law enacted in 1951. Further, as the state faces unprecedented budget shortfalls, technology advancements should be utilized to achieve savings in all phases of government. Technology now provides the ability to hold public meetings with public officials located at different locations around the state. Teleconferencing provides the ability for people to meet in real time from different locations and avoid the time and expense of travel.

Section 15609 of the Government Code is added to read:

15609. The board shall hold ~~regular~~ at least 12 meetings a year at the state capital ~~each month, and may hold special meetings or~~ at such times and places within the state as the ~~chairman~~ chairperson directs. At any meeting the board may transact any and all business and perform all duties imposed upon it and give and enter any and all orders and decrees within its jurisdiction.